

Mysterious Strangers

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Summary: Two strangers meet at a bus stop

1. Part One

Author's Note: This story is rated PG for a little violence.

The wind was cold. As Gwyneth sat there, waiting for her bus, she gazed at the stars. A man sat down next to her. He was in his late to mid 20's, close in age to twenty-four year old Gwynn. He was about average height, thin, with black messy hair and looked like he hadn't shaved in weeks. He was wearing a ragged brown coat over a nice black suit and burgundy tie. He turned to look at her. He had brilliant green eyes that shined like emeralds and was quite handsome.

"Where are you going?" Gwynn asked him.

"Manhattan," he answered, smiling. When he smiled, he was very handsome, Gwynn noticed.

"Me too," she replied. Suddenly a thought willed her head, what if this guy is a rapist or serial killer? Now he knows where you live! She looked at him again. She was having a very hard time being scared of him. Well, Ted Bundy was handsome also. And you live in New York now Gwynn! You need to be careful!

"Have you lived here long?" he asked. Gwynn now detected a British accent in his speech.

"A while," she admitted. "I've been here about four years." Stupid girl she was! "How long have you lived here?" she asked.

"About two weeks," he said, "he said. His accent was fascinating. So lovely.

"Where did you move here from?" she asked.

"England." He said. That was a stupid question. She knew that from

his accent.

"Where in England?"

"North of London. In Surrey." He said. He glanced at his watch.

"Why'd you choose New York?" she asked.

"Why not? It's big and exciting. You can start over here."

"I know," she said.

"Where did you live before New York?" he asked.

"California," she said.

"Long way from home, aren't we," he said with a smile.

"California isn't home, it was just temporary sanctuary." She sighed.

"Where's home?" he asked.

"North Carolina," she lied. She wasn't about to tell him where she was really from, just in case he was another serial killer like Ted Bundy.

"I've been kind of rude," he said. "My name's James Porter."

"Felicity Meristem," she lied again. "Most people call me Lissie though. I don't know where it's from, it just kind of stuck." Lissie was her best friend in the whole world and had been so since the girls were eight. She had found Gwynn her apartment, helped her find a job, and shared her secrets with her. Gwynn herself had made up the nickname Lissie when the two met.

They saw the bus drive up. "Is this it?" he asked.

"Yes. It's a bit crowded," she said as she got on. She sat down two rows from the front. James sat down beside her.

"Are you married?" he asked.

"No, I'm divorced," she said. She didn't know why he was asking. Or why she was answering. There was something mysterious about him. "Are you?"

"Married? No. I was engaged once," he smiled sadly, as if he had a secret.

"Oh," Gwynn said. It was awkward; she wanted to ask him about his fiancée, but she couldn't without being rude and the possibility he would ask her about her ex-husband.

"My mother had hair like yours." He said.

"Really?" She was surprised. She fingered her thick auburn hair. "Usually it's a bit more red than this, but lately it's been more

brown,' she commented. She liked how James looked her straight in the eye when he talked to her. She wondered what he saw in her light gray eyes that was so hypnotizing.

"Does your mother live in England?" Gwynn asked.

"No, she died when I was a baby. She and my father both; I only have pictures of them." James replied.

"What happened?"

"Car crash. It was awful."

"Were you in the care too?"

"Yeah. I don't know how I lived though." He said.

"I'm so sorry," She decided to share something. "My parents died in a car crash too, about three years ago."

"I'm so sorry Lissie," James said with real concern. It took Gwynn a minute to realize he was talking to her, she was in such deep thought. "Lissie, what do you do for a living?" he asked.

"I'm a computer consultant," she said. "What do you do, James?"

"I'm an writer," he said. "Do you have any siblings? Sorry for all the questions, I just loveâ€|"

"Hearing other people's stories," Gwynn finished. James nodded. "I do to. Well, I have two sisters, ages nineteen and twenty. The twenty year old, Grace, lives in England actually. And Catherine is in Boston."

"That's great," he said so sincerely. They talked until the bust stopped at Gwynn's stop.

"This is my stop. Bye James," she said.

"Bye Lissie. Do you ride this bus every day?" she nodded. "Well, I'll see you tomorrow."

All during the next day Gwynn couldn't concentrate. Who was this mysterious James? It was driving her crazy. She couldn't wait until it was time to go.

He was already there. He had shaved and looked remarkably younger. They talked the entire time. She learned that he had lived with an aunt and uncle as a child, the Dursleys, whom he hated. He was twenty one. He had gone to a London boarding school, the Academy of Wiltshire for Young Boys. But it seemed as he was keeping something from her. Maybe he is a serial killer, she thought.

They met and talked each night at the bus stop. She felt that she almost trusted him, although she shouldn't. She still felt as he had a big secret. She decided to do a little background research.

"Grace, hi!" Gwynn said as she called her sister on the telephone.

"Hey sis. What's up? You don't usually call me until Sunday when we're on three way with Catherine, and it's just Friday."

"Well, I need a little help," Gwynn admitted. "You live in London, right? Do you know of a Wiltshire Academy for Boys?"

"I can find out. Do you want the number?" Grace asked.

"Yeah, that would be great. Do you know what the area code is for Surrey?" Gwynn asked.

"Uh, I can find that out too. What's up? Why all the England things?" Grace inquired.

"No reason, I'm just curious," Gwynn lied. "Call me back as soon as possible, OK?"

"Sure. I still find this highly suspicious, Gwynn. And highly out of character." Grace teased.

"Just find out, OK?" Gwynn said and hung up. Stupid annoying Grace. No, Gwynn was just frustrated. She laid down on her bed and tried to sleep. About an hour later, the phone rang.

"Gwynn, it's me," Grace's voice said.

"What'd you find?" Gwynn inquired.

"The area code for Surrey is 392. And there is no Wiltshire Academy for Boys in London or anywhere in England for that matter."

"No school!" How could this be? He must have lied. But so did she, she reminded herself. "Thanks Grace," she said.

"OK. Is there a number in Surrey you want?"

"Yeah, but I can find it out from here. Thanks Grace," Gwynn said.

"Your very welcome sissy," Grace said and hung up.

This was very interesting. She called the operator for Surrey.

"What's the number for a Vernon and Petunia Dursley?" she asked. She wrote the number down, and then called it. A cross woman answered.

"Hello, Dursley residence."

"Hello, my name is Felicity Meristem. DO you have a nephew named James Porter that once lived with you?"

"No, I have no nephew named James Porter," the woman snapped.

"But you do have a nephew though, don't you?" Gwynn asked.

"No nephew here. Why are you calling here? Are you selling something?" she asked.

"No, but your nephew won something. A contest. If he's not living with you anymore, you get all the profits," Gwynn lied.

"My nephew has been gone for four years. When can this prize be delivered?" she asked greedily.

"What was your nephew's name?"

"Harry Potter. Ugly common name if you ask me. When can this prize be delivered," she asked again.

"Very soon. Do you have any pictures of him? Just for verification." Gwynn asked.

"One. Would you like me to fax it to you?" she asked. She was much politer when she knew she was getting something out of this.

"Please. My fax number is 345-654-3235. This would be greatly appreciated." Gwynn smiled.

"Your welcome. When will the prize be delivered?" she asked for the third time.

"After we have verified you nephew, it will be sent in the mail." Gwynn said and hung up. About ten minutes later her phone rang. Don't get it, it's the fax, she thought. The fax machine turned on and started getting the message. It was a very blurred picture, and there was many people, but one boy with black hair and green eyes stood out. The picture was taken about five years ago, but he was still recognizable. The boy was the man she knew as James Potter, Mr. Harry Potter.

2. Part Two

She tried all weekend to get more information on him, but it seemed that he was invisible. No phone number, no boarding school in England had even heard of him, and she wasn't about to call his aunt and uncle again. They had been rude enough. Finally around noon Sunday she gave up and decided to have lunch with Felicity.

"Hey Lissie!" Gwynn said. The real Felicity Meristem had long brown hair and bright blue eyes. She was very pretty. They ate lunch at a small caf   in the heart of Manhattan. IT was very nice. They talked the entire time. Gwynn smiled. She loved Lissie so very much and felt so guilty about using her name. Oh well, she thought.

"Someone asked about you on Saturday," she said.

"Really? Who?" Gwynn asked curiously.

"A guy was bringing something more for me to read (Lissie is a publisher) and he saw the picture of you I have on my desk. He was very handsome and asked your name."

"Did you tell it to him?" Gwynn asked nervously. She didn't want to be stalked.

"Just first name. You should be flattered. Actually I have guys

asking about you all the time. You're a very hot topic in the writing world, Gwynn." Gwynn felt her face blush and she playfully hit Lissie on the arm.

"You are too much. Guys are asking about you too. Just all the guys I work with are totally nerdy and still play video games, so I don't think you'd be interested." Gwynn smiled.

"How old are they?" Lissie asked in disgust.

"They range, from about thirty to my dad's age." They both started laughing hard. Lissie always made everything better.

It was Monday already. James, no Harry, was already there. He smiled at her.

"Hey Gwynn, how's it going?" he said casually.

"Oh, everything's fineâ€|" she trailed off. He called her Gwynn. How did he know? Oh, stupid her, he was the one who asked about Lissie about her. Stupid Gwynn. SO much for being one step ahead of him.

"Meeting the real Felicity Meristem was kind of a red flag that you've been lying to me." He commented coldly. His eyes narrowed. "What else have you lied to me about?" he asked.

"Look who's talking Harry." She said angrily. His eyes widened. "Yeah, I do my research too."

"How much do you know about me?" he asked meekly.

"I know your name is Harry Potter, and that you didn't go to the Wiltshire Academy for Young Boys. In fact, no boarding school in London has ever heard of you. No one has heard of you. Who are you Harry?"

"Well, who are you Gwynn?" he asked. "You know, I think we need to start over. My name is Harry Potter. And you are?"

"Gwyneth Amblers. I'm a divorced twenty four year old Stamford graduate with a major in computer science and a minor in drama. I was born in Atlanta, Georgia and grew up there." She said. "Your turn."

"I'm a once engaged twenty one year old. I was born in England to Lily and James Potter, who died in a car crash when I was a baby. I was raised by my Aunt and Uncle in Surrey, then I went of to a private boarding school in Scotland. I didn't go to college, and I chose writing because it was something I could do." Harry said. "Anything else?"

"My best friend in the world is Felicity Meristem, we met when we were eight, and have been best friends ever since. I made up her nickname Lissie because I thought it was cute. It kind of stuck. I really do have two sisters, Grace and Catherine, ages twenty and nineteen. Grace is in England studying at Oxford University, and Catherine is at Harvard. I would have gone to Harvard too but we then couldn't afford it." Gwynn was relieved to get everything out. "Anything to add Harry?"

"No, that's about it," he said. "What about your ex-husband?" he asked,

"If I tell you about him you get to tell me about your fiancée."

"Agreed," Harry said. "But you go first."

"OK. Listen, this is hard, because the only other person who knows all this is Lissie. Even my sisters don't know everything." She said.

"OK. I'll be nice," he said.

"When I was a sophomore in high school, I started dating Charles. We were friends at first, so we got along well. We dated all through high school and I really loved him. He asked me to marry him one day our senior year but I turned him down. He was going to Emory, a local school, that I couldn't afford. If I stayed I would go to Georgia State, but I would get a better opportunity at Stamford. It hurt like hell, but I turned him down. I put my career first. My dad was in computer science and I knew it well, so I decided to go into it. I wanted to be an actress, but it wasn't practical."

"Who cares about practical? My entire life hasn't been practical," Harry asked.

"I care about it. I didn't want to go to Hollywood and become an actress and figure out I wasn't any good. So I went to Stamford. I still was really healing from Charles. Then I started to date Rob. I skipped two years in college, and he was a junior like me, but he was two years older than me. Rob was really cool and handsome, I often wondered what he saw in me. We started dating. One night we were fighting and he slapped me. I should have left then, but I didn't. I don't know why."

"I'm sorry," Harry said. He was starting to see where Gwynn's story was going.

"It's not your fault," she said with a smile. "It was mine. I married the guy about six months before we graduated. I was still nineteen. We moved to a small apartment right off campus. I knew after three months of marriage that this wasn't going to work. We were so different, we fought about everything, and on our worse fights he would hit me. I guess he saw where marriage was going, and he started drinking. When he was drunk he was awful. Most of the time I hid in my room and locked the door. I remember one night, about five months into our marriage, he came home so drunk. I was making dinner in the kitchen. He was so pissed about something. He started yelling and screaming and throwing things at me. Then he took a butcher knife from the kitchen and went after me with it. I ran into a closet, locked the door and hid. He literally tried to chop the door down. I have never been so scared in my life and I hope I never have to be that scared again. The next day, instead of going to class, I went downtown and filed for a divorce and a restraining order. I finished the rest of the year at a friends and then moved to New York with Lissie. I went to grad school here and have been here ever since."

"That's awful Gwynn." Harry looked at her.

"I know. It's been four years and I can still remember it so well. I was so pitiful."

"You shouldn't be so hard on yourself. You got out. You should be proud," he said.

"I am," she said softly. "All right, it's your turn. What about your fiancée?"

"She really wasn't my fiancée. She barely knew I loved her. I just kind of imagined that she was so much I started to believe it. She was killed when I was seventeen. She was murdered, trying to save me. She died for me. I kind of ran away after she was killed. I didn't fit in anymore. Some of my old friends tried to contact me, but I didn't return them. I didn't belong with them anymore."

"Why?" Gwynn asked.

Harry paused. How could he tell her this without telling her the truth? With out telling her what he was? "They all were ambitious, and my dreams died the night that my fiancée died."

"I'm so sorry Harry. We won't dwell on it. Let's change the subject. This is depressing." He nodded his head in agreement. They then started talking about other things, like plays and childhood friends.

Weeks passed, then months. It was late spring when Harry waited excitedly for Gwynn. He had news for her that would make her ecstatic. "Gwynn!" He shouted when he saw her. "Gwynn, you'll never guess what happened!"

"What?" she asked, amused.

"I got you an audition."

Her mouth dropped open. "A what?"

"I got you an audition for Chicago."

"Harry, that's a Broadway show. A major Broadway show," she said.

"I know, and you've got an audition! My neighbor works as something or another and I asked for you an audition and you got one!" he shouted. She screamed with joy and gave him a big hug.

"Thank you thank you thank you!" she shouted. Gwynn spent the entire bus ride thanking him. He never had said your welcome so many times in his life.

"Good luck!" he called as she got off the bus.

"Thank you!" she called out again.

Harry found out from his neighbor the next day that she had gotten a part. He was so happy for Gwynn, but sad at the same time. She was happy again. He was not. He could never do what he loved again, while

she could. He looked around his apartment. He needed to leave. He called for the times of a bus that went to the airport. He started to pack when he heard a knock on his door. IT was Gwynn.

"I got a part! It's not the lead or anything but it pays and I love it! I love to be acting again!" she screamed. "Oh thank you Harry! Thank you!" She looked around the room. "Where are you going?"

"Away."

"Away where?"

"I don't know. I just need to leave again," he said.

"Oh Harry don't go! I'll miss you too much!" Gwynn cried.

"I have to. Look, my bus leaves in ten minutes. I need to go now," He said. Gwynn looked at him. Suddenly she threw her arms around him and Harry returned the embrace. He kissed her forehead. "Bye Gwynn," he said, and left. Gwyneth Amblers never saw him again.

Harry sat on the bus. He forced himself to think about that night. The night that ruined his life. All he remembered were bits and pieces of it. Voldemort had come back into power and wanted to kill Harry. They fought for a while, and Harry was weakening. Voldemort was going to kill him, in one curse. Then she came. She ran up and blocked the curse. It killed her, but saved Harry. Voldemort was quickly losing his power, and he couldn't kill Harry. But he did something worse, he took Harry's powers away. Harry was a muggle. And then Dumbledore finished Voldemort off. Harry's hopes rose, and then fell again when Dumbledore said that he couldn't give him his powers back, or bring his fiancée back. With that Harry left the wizarding world. He didn't belong anymore. His friends tried to find him but Harry didn't want to be found.

Harry out a picture of his love. She was waving to him with a big smile on her face. Oh he missed her so. Why did she do something so stupid? Why hadn't she let him die? A tear ran down his cheek. Stupid Hogwarts. Stupid Voldemort. He would never be happy again; he felt as dementors were gathered all around him.

But that was what he learned from Gwynn.

Even when you feel like you never will be happy again sometimes you find happiness is something you didn't expect. And maybe happiness was waiting for Harry. He just had to find it.

Author's Note: I love the moral to this story. Please review! I really want to know what you think.

End
file.